NEWS

# Christopher Senior sworn in as new Winchester town manager on first day

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

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Winchester Town Clerk MaryEllen Marshall, right, swears in new Town Manager Christopher Senior on Jan. 14. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/PETER CASEY

Christopher Senior took the oath of office Tuesday, Jan. 14, offici
beginning his tenure as Winchester's town manager after a month

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search for permanent leadership.

The ceremony took place in the Select Board room at Town Hall, with all five select Board members present alongside Town Clerk MaryEllen Marshall, Town Moderator Philip Frattaroli and municipal staff.

Coffee and pastries were served before and after the formal proceedings.

Town Manager Christopher Senior, center, poses with members of the Winchester Select Board, from left, Bill McGonigle, Anthea Brady, Michelle Prior, Michael Bettencourt and Paras Bhayani following his swearing-in ceremony Tuesday, Jan. 14, at Town Hall. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO / WILL DOWD

Senior's swearing-in marks the end of a leadership transition that began in July when former town manager Beth Rudolph resigned. The town operated under interim leadership until the Select Board approved Senior's contract earlier this month following a Dec. 22 vote to offer him the position.

Richard Rohan, a Precinct 2 member who has been involved in town government for more than 20 years, attended the ceremony after learning about it through an email from the town manager's office.

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"I hope that he succeeds, stays for quite a while," Rohan said. "We do need the stability."

Rohan noted Senior's previous tenure in Cohasset, where he served as town manager.

"[Senior] was at Cohasset for 12 years," Rohan said. "I hope he has a nice, long tenure here, [too]."

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Senior's appointment followed a search process in which two other finalists withdrew from consideration.

Rohan, who also served on the State of the Town Committee, said the timing of Senior's arrival is significant given upcoming challenges.

"I think it's a good time for a new direction as well," Rohan said. "We're just starting down the runway, and we've got a good, solid pilot here."

The Select Board finalized a two-year contract with Senior that includes a performance review between nine and 12 months into his tenure. Renewal of the second year is contingent on a successful evaluation by majority vote of the board.

Marshall had been serving as acting town manager since the Dec. 31 departure of interim town manager Stephen Delaney, who filled the role beginning in September.

Select Board Chair Michelle Prior announced the contract approval Jan. 9 in a message to town staff, writing that the board was "grateful fo patience over these past few months as we've experienced multi transitions since Labor Day.

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Winchester Town Clerk MaryEllen Marshall, right, shakes hand with the town's brand new Town Manager Christopher Senior. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/PETER CASEY

During the Dec. 22 meeting when Senior received the board's offer, Prior outlined mounting costs of the vacancy, including stalled goal-setting, delayed department head performance reviews tied to potential bonuses and union contract negotiations on hold.

Senior's start date allows for transition planning before critical budget season deadlines. The town faces time-sensitive matters requiring executive oversight, including budget planning and statutory deadlines tied to upcoming town actions.

According to reporting in the Cohasset Anchor, Senior announced in October 2025 that he would not seek renewal of his contract in Cohasset. He told Winchester News he felt it would not be appropriate to sign a new contract while actively seeking another position.

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Select Board member Paras Bhayani reported in December that a reference check praised Senior's relationship management skills and his work achieving a AAA bond rating for Cohasset.

The board worked with consultant Mary Aicardi of the Collins Center for Public Management to develop contract terms for the experienced municipal administrator.

Senior's appointment provides Winchester with its first permanent town manager since Rudolph's Sept. 3 departure, ending a period of interim and acting leadership that lasted more than four months.

*Will Dowd is a Massachusetts journalist who covers municipal government and community life for Winchester News. He previously co-founded the Marblehead Current and now runs The Marblehead Independent, a reader-funded digital newsroom.*

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The Winchester Select Board on Feb. 23 approved an overnight parking pilot, raised building permit fees for the first time since 2021, adopted the 2026 outdoor dining policy and directed the town manager to examine reinvesting downtown-generated revenue into town center improvements. The board voted unanimously to implement the overnight

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